



[BILLING CODE: 6750-01S]

FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION

[File No. 112 3001]

Serious Energy, Inc.; Analysis of Proposed Consent Order to Aid Public Comment

AGENCY: Federal Trade Commission.

ACTION: Proposed Consent Agreement.

SUMMARY: The consent agreement in this matter settles alleged violations of federal law prohibiting unfair or deceptive acts or practices or unfair methods of competition. The attached Analysis to Aid Public Comment describes both the allegations in the draft complaint and the terms of the consent order -- embodied in the consent agreement -- that would settle these allegations.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before March 23, 2012.

ADDRESSES: Interested parties may file a comment online or on paper, by following the instructions in the Request for Comment part of the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section below. Write "Serious Energy, File No. 112 3001" on your comment, and file your comment online at <https://ftcpublishcommentworks.com/ftc/seriousenergyconsent>, by following the instructions on the web-based form. If you prefer to file your comment on paper, mail or deliver your comment to the following address: Federal Trade Commission, Office of the Secretary, Room H-113 (Annex D), 600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20580.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: James A. Kohm (202-326-2640) or Joshua S. Millard (202-326-2454), FTC, Bureau of Consumer Protection, 600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20580.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Pursuant to section 6(f) of the Federal Trade Commission Act, 38 Stat. 721, 15 U.S.C. 46(f), and § 2.34 the Commission Rules of Practice, 16 CFR 2.34, notice is hereby given that the above-captioned consent agreement containing a consent order to cease and desist, having been filed with and accepted, subject to final approval, by the Commission, has been placed on the public record for a period of thirty (30) days. The following Analysis to Aid Public Comment describes the terms of the consent agreement, and the allegations in the complaint. An electronic copy of the full text of the consent agreement package can be obtained from the FTC Home Page (for February 22, 2012), on the World Wide Web, at <http://www.ftc.gov/os/actions.shtm>. A paper copy can be obtained from the FTC Public Reference Room, Room 130-H, 600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20580, either in person or by calling (202) 326-2222.

You can file a comment online or on paper. For the Commission to consider your comment, we must receive it on or before March 23, 2012. Write "Serious Energy, File No. 112 3001" on your comment. Your comment – including your name and your state – will be placed on the public record of this proceeding, including, to the extent practicable, on the public Commission Website, at <http://www.ftc.gov/os/publiccomments.shtm>. As a matter of discretion, the Commission tries to remove individuals' home contact information from comments before placing them on the Commission Website.

Because your comment will be made public, you are solely responsible for making sure that your comment does not include any sensitive personal information, like anyone's Social Security number, date of birth, driver's license number or other state identification number or foreign country equivalent, passport number, financial account number, or credit or debit card number. You are also solely responsible for making sure that your comment does not include

any sensitive health information, like medical records or other individually identifiable health information. In addition, do not include any “[t]rade secret or any commercial or financial information which is obtained from any person and which is privileged or confidential,” as provided in Section 6(f) of the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C. 46(f), and FTC Rule 4.10(a)(2), 16 CFR 4.10(a)(2). In particular, do not include competitively sensitive information such as costs, sales statistics, inventories, formulas, patterns, devices, manufacturing processes, or customer names.

If you want the Commission to give your comment confidential treatment, you must file it in paper form, with a request for confidential treatment, and you have to follow the procedure explained in FTC Rule 4.9(c), 16 CFR 4.9(c).¹ Your comment will be kept confidential only if the FTC General Counsel, in his or her sole discretion, grants your request in accordance with the law and the public interest.

Postal mail addressed to the Commission is subject to delay due to heightened security screening. As a result, we encourage you to submit your comments online. To make sure that the Commission considers your online comment, you must file it at <https://ftcpublic.commentworks.com/ftc/seriousenergyconsent> by following the instructions on the web-based form. If this Notice appears at <http://www.regulations.gov/#!home>, you also may file a comment through that website.

If you file your comment on paper, write “Serious Energy, File No. 112 3001” on your comment and on the envelope, and mail or deliver it to the following address: Federal Trade Commission, Office of the Secretary, Room H-113 (Annex D), 600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW,

¹ In particular, the written request for confidential treatment that accompanies the comment must include the factual and legal basis for the request, and must identify the specific portions of the comment to be withheld from the public record. *See* FTC Rule 4.9(c), 16 CFR 4.9(c).

Washington, DC 20580. If possible, submit your paper comment to the Commission by courier or overnight service.

Visit the Commission Website at <http://www.ftc.gov> to read this Notice and the news release describing it. The FTC Act and other laws that the Commission administers permit the collection of public comments to consider and use in this proceeding as appropriate. The Commission will consider all timely and responsive public comments that it receives on or before March 23, 2012. You can find more information, including routine uses permitted by the Privacy Act, in the Commission's privacy policy, at <http://www.ftc.gov/ftc/privacy.htm>.

Analysis of Agreement Containing Consent Order to Aid Public Comment

The Federal Trade Commission ("FTC" or "Commission") has accepted, subject to final approval, an agreement containing a consent order from Serious Energy, Inc., a corporation ("respondent").

The proposed consent order has been placed on the public record for thirty (30) days for receipt of comments by interested persons. Comments received during this period will become part of the public record. After thirty (30) days, the Commission will again review the agreement and the comments received, and will decide whether it should withdraw from the agreement or make final the agreement's proposed order.

This matter involves respondent's marketing and sale of replacement windows for use in residences. According to the FTC complaint, respondent represented that consumers who replace their windows with SeriousWindows 600 Quantum 2 Series windows are likely to achieve residential energy savings of 49% or save 49% on residential heating and cooling costs. Additionally, according to the FTC complaint, respondent represented that consumers who replace their windows with SeriousWindows 501 Series windows are likely to achieve

residential energy savings of 40% or save 40% on residential heating and cooling costs.

The complaint alleges that respondent did not possess and rely upon a reasonable basis substantiating these representations when it made them. Many factors determine the savings homeowners can realize by replacing their windows, including the home's geographic location, size, insulation package, and existing windows. Consumers who replace single or double-paned wood or vinyl-framed windows – common residential window types in the United States – with SeriousWindows replacement windows are not likely to achieve a 40% or 49% reduction in residential energy consumption or heating and cooling costs. The complaint also alleges that, by providing its independent dealers and installers with advertising and other promotional materials making the above unsubstantiated representations, respondent provided the means and instrumentalities to engage in deceptive practices. Thus, the complaint alleges that respondent engaged in unfair or deceptive practices in violation of Section 5(a) of the FTC Act.

Some promotional materials challenged in the FTC's complaint include the words “up to” in an apparent attempt to qualify representations that consumers who replace windows with respondent's windows are likely to achieve specified amounts of residential energy savings or reduction in residential heating and cooling costs. In the context of specific ads in this case, the words “up to” do not effectively qualify such representations for replacement windows. The FTC's complaint and the proposed consent order should not be interpreted as a general statement of how the Commission may interpret or take other action concerning representations including the words “up to” for other products or services in the future.

The proposed consent order contains three provisions designed to prevent respondent from engaging in similar acts and practices in the future. Part I addresses the marketing of windows. It prohibits respondent from making any representation that: (A) consumers who

replace their windows with respondent's windows achieve up to or a specified amount or percentage of energy savings or reduction in heating and cooling costs; or (B) respondent guarantees or pledges that consumers who replace their windows with respondent's windows will achieve up to or a specified amount or percentage of energy savings or reduction in heating and cooling costs; unless the representation is non-misleading and, at the time of making such representation, respondent possesses and relies upon competent and reliable scientific evidence to substantiate that all or almost all consumers are likely to receive the maximum represented savings or reduction. Further, if respondent represents, guarantees, or pledges that consumers achieve such energy savings or heating and cooling cost reductions under specified circumstances, it must: disclose those circumstances clearly and prominently in close proximity to such representation, guarantee, or pledge; and substantiate that all or almost all consumers are likely to receive the maximum represented, guaranteed, or pledged savings or reduction under those circumstances (*e.g.*, when replacing a window of a specific composition in a building having a specific level of insulation in a specific region). The performance standard imposed under this Part constitutes fencing-in relief reasonably necessary to ensure that any future energy savings or reduction claims are not deceptive.

Parts II and III address any product or service for which respondent makes any energy-related efficacy representation. Part II prohibits respondent from making any representation: (A) that any specific number or percentage of consumers who replace their windows with respondent's windows achieve energy savings or reduction in heating and cooling costs; or (B) about energy consumption, energy savings, energy costs, heating and cooling costs, U-factor, solar heat gain coefficient, R-value, K-value, insulating properties, thermal performance, or energy-related efficacy; unless the representation is non-misleading and substantiated by

competent and reliable scientific evidence. Part III prohibits respondent from providing to others the means and instrumentalities with which to make any false, unsubstantiated, or otherwise misleading representation of material fact. It defines “means and instrumentalities” to mean any information, including any advertising, labeling, or promotional, sales training, or purported substantiation materials, for use by trade customers in their marketing of any such product or service.

Parts IV through VII require respondent to: keep copies of advertisements and materials relied upon in disseminating any representation covered by the order; provide copies of the order to certain personnel, agents, and representatives having responsibilities with respect to the subject matter of the order; notify the Commission of changes in its structure that might affect compliance obligations under the order; and file a compliance report with the Commission and respond to other requests from FTC staff. Part VIII provides that the order will terminate after twenty (20) years under certain circumstances.

The purpose of this analysis is to facilitate public comment on the proposed order. It is not intended to constitute an official interpretation of the complaint or the proposed order, or to modify the proposed order’s terms in any way.

By direction of the Commission, Commissioner Rosch abstaining.

Donald S. Clark
Secretary.

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